BAICE Presidential Address 2018

Policy Transfer, Sustainable Development and the Contexts of Education

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Abstract

As comparative and international researchers in education we are especially well placed to contribute to the analysis and understanding of global trends in both education and international development. In times of ever increasing complexity and uncertainty it can also be argued that we have a responsibility to do so, and to do so in rigorous but accessible ways. In this Presidential Address I (1) consider how we might do this in the light of the BAICE 2018 Conference theme, (2) argue how and why the critical interrogation of the processes of educational policy transfer lie at the heart of this, and (3) draw upon work inspired by BAICE during its first 20 years, along with my own related research in a diversity of contexts worldwide.

Keywords

Comparative research, policy transfer, context, reference societies, international league tables, big data, sustainable development.

Introduction

To help set the paper in an intellectual and historical context and, hopefully, enhance its accessibility, I will first reflect upon relevant aspects of my own personal and research biography. This is, I believe, appropriate in the format and tradition of a Presidential Address. I will then revisit the changing nature and significance of research on education policy transfer, applying that as a theoretical lens for a critical examination of the conference theme, related selections from my own research and reflections on the development of the British Association of International and Comparative Education (BAICE) throughout its first 20 years.

Some Biographical Foundations

The Shibden Valley in Yorkshire was important in my early years. I am sure that growing up in this green belt valley inspired my young self to enjoy the freedoms of exploration and adventure and to value the natural environment … and its sustainability. By my teenage years I was also developing a wider view of the world through the experience of diverse friendships, the influence of blues, soul and other music, and a growing critical awareness of the impact of class and culture. These were days of rapid social change and the emergence of a new, disruptive and creative global youth culture … the changing times that inspired John Lennon to say that for him 'before Elvis there was nothing'. I hope readers can see how this early formative experience came to influence some of my own intellectual perspectives, priorities and research as discussed in later sections of this paper.

My first real encounter with comparative education came from attending a lecture, as an undergraduate, by Philip Foster that was based on his then highly influential work on 'The Vocational School Fallacy in Development Planning' (1965). Foster wrote clearly and accessibly about his original field research in schools and communities in Ghana; but, most significantly, this was done in ways that interrogated received wisdom and challenged dominant narratives about the role of schooling in both personal and national development. This was an inspiring presentation based on research that had theoretical depth combined with significant policy relevance. For me, it led to a growing interest in comparative and international education, and to my enrolment for a Masters degree in Education and International Development at the University of London, Institute of Education. This was followed by a number of important years of professional experience teaching in secondary schools in the north of England. The urge to widen experience then led to a move in 1979 to Melbourne, Australia, to do a PhD in comparative education. This, and an Australian Research Scholarship, offered a chance to travel and to carry out fieldwork on education in the Pacific.

My teaching experience throughout much of the 1970s had already generated a personal critique of the impact of repeated education policy change on the quality of education, and on the wellbeing and professional standing of practicing teachers in the UK. I was also becoming aware of

the ways in which research on education too often failed to document the challenges faced during the implementation of educational reform, rarely provided accessible feedback to research participants, and captured little of the lived realities of teaching and learning at that time. This experience underpinned my subsequent doctoral research on the international transfer of British education policy priorities, especially those promoting school-based curriculum development, to Australia, and then from Australia to Papua New Guinea.

My initial research in Papua New Guinea involved long term ethnographic fieldwork based at Kagua Provincial High School, located at 5000 feet above sea level, in the remote Southern Highlands. The fieldwork for this built upon early school case study research by writers such as Lacey (1970) and Burgess (1983) and led to one of the first in-depth, qualitative case studies of a secondary school engaged in educational reform in a low-income country (Crossley, 1984a). The research focussed on the process of educational reform in context, and revealed the challenges faced by teachers in implementing school-based curriculum development in a poorly resourced school system. The international transfer of this British approach to curriculum development was found to be unrealistic and unsustainable in the context of 1980s Papua New Guinea. Some success had been possible in the form of a well-resourced pilot project, but that was not repeatable or sustainable nationwide (Crossley, 1984b). Related publications built upon this foundation and explored the wider potential for qualitative educational research in low-income countries (Crossley and Vulliamy, 1984, 1997). A subsequent appointment to a post at the University of Papua New Guinea in 1983 facilitated further research, the formation of long term friendships and family connections, and much valuable experience in the Pacific…until a move was made to the University of Bristol in 1990.

Since that time much of my work has explored the theoretical and methodological dimensions of comparative education (see, for example, Crossley and Watson, 2003), and challenged the uncritical international transfer of educational policy and practice with particular reference to the impact upon, and implications for, small island developing states (SIDS) and other low income countries (Crossley and Holmes, 1999; Crossley, Bray and Packer, 2011). It is to this, and to the themes of the 20th Anniversary Conference for BAICE, that I now turn.

The Changing Nature and Significance of Comparative Research on Education Policy Transfer

While the theme of education policy transfer or 'borrowing' has consistently featured in my own research, it has long been central to the field of comparative education. In this section of the paper I will try to avoid repeating the most familiar arguments and material [1], although I do want to reflect upon how and why the nature and significance of research on policy transfer has changed, and increased, in our times of intensified globalisation.

Work on the emergent field of comparative education is well known for documenting how early researchers such as Jullien de Paris (1817) sought to 'deduce true principles and determined routes so that education would be transformed in to an almost positive science' (Fraser, 1964: 20). Assumptions that underpinned this systematic, positivistic perspective influenced and promoted international education policy transfer throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most notably through the imposition and impact of colonialism. A recent special issue of *Compare* reflects upon Jullien's legacy and his influence on both the field and on contemporary, large-scale, cross-national comparisons of student achievement (Wolhuter, 2017). Contributors to that 200th anniversary issue, such as Forestier and Adamson (2017), also argue that while Jullien's positivistic epistemology is similar in nature to that of many recent international surveys, his positioning was more 'holistic' than some…including the globally influential PISA studies (OECD, 2013, 2016).

Challenges to such 'scientific' thinking and related assumptions can be traced back to very different modes of context sensitive comparative research inspired by the work of Michael Sadler at the start of the twentieth century (Sadler, 1900). This was developed into a distinctive 'socio-cultural' approach to comparative education by leading figures in the establishment of the modern field such as Isaac Kandel (1933), Vernon Mallinson (1957) and Edmund King (1965). Sadler's influence led to a more critical and academic approach that emphasised the analysis and understanding of education in context, at the same time as its 'practical value' challenged the proponents of simplistic education policy transfer. Importantly, Sadler also argued that, 'what happens outside the school is more important than what happens inside because it shapes and influences what takes place inside,' (cited in Higginson, 1979: 52). While it may now be fashionable to point to the limitations of such work, some of the more recent theoretical and conceptual advances owe much to

[1] For detail on definitions and early publications and arguments on this theme see Crossley and Watson (2003), and Phillips and Schweisfurth (2014).

Sadler's contribution, and, as discussed below, new iterations of the socio-cultural perspective continue to shape the policy transfer literature.

Well known analytical models and conceptual frameworks that recognise the complexities of policy transfer and have influenced the contemporary literature include Dolowitz and Marsh's (1996; 2000) 'continuum' perspective derived from the field of political science; Phillips and Ochs's (2003) four stage dialectic typology; and Jakobi's (2012) conception of global governance institutions as 'central nodes for policy diffusion'. Revealing further complexity, Perry and Tor (2009) note how the notion of 'educational transfer' is broader than policy borrowing and encompasses ideas, ideology, practices and institutions, involving multiple actors within and across systems. They also refer to what they call a 'neo-institutionalist or social positivist' framework for transfer, and its association with the pursuit and promotion of one-size-fits-all 'best practice'. In the light of such trends, Nóvoa and Yariv-Mashal (2003) are concerned that much comparative work is already being used to legitimise policy positioning, suggesting that this threatens academic integrity and criticality and represents a major challenge for the field. Ozga (2012: 19) more pointedly suggests that PISA data strengthens:

> 'the influence of the non-governmental actors who construct it and claim to understand it: the external experts, commercial agencies and consultancies that service PISA and generate income from it'.

For Auld and Morris (2014; Morris, 2012) this represents a 'new paradigm of comparative education' and its 'influential intermediary network' of consultants, backed up by large-scale quantitative evidence that is prioritised by both policy-makers and research funders.

Such theoretical work on policy transfer, and the insights it generates, is especially helpful for understanding and interrogating the nature, politics and influence of powerful global 'governance' mechanisms, including the OECD's PISA surveys. My own work (Crossley, 2014) resonates with this, and with that of Tröhler (2015) who argues that the positivist paradigm and quantification is now driving too much policy in a top-down way that marginalises democratic voices that can be better accessed through qualitative research. I will return to my contributions to this line of critique in later sections.

The influence of globalisation has thus played a part in both generating new forms of policy transfer and in stimulating a resurgence of interest in the analysis of such processes. This can be seen in reflective and

historical accounts by Beech (2006), Cowen (2009) and Portnoi (2016); and in influential critical policy studies by Ball (1998, 2012) that view national policy making as a process of 'bricolage'. More specifically, Steiner-Khamsi and Waldow (2012) build on long standing challenges to the significance of nation-state levels of comparison, question world systems 'convergence theory' (see also Dale, 2000), and support those who draw attention to the 'global frame' for the improved analysis and understanding of policy borrowing. From this perspective the education policy making act is 'deterritoralized' and 'compressed' in time, and a wide range of 'governance technologies' are recognised as influencing policy transfer, including cross-national surveys, competitive league tables, international goals and targets, and movements towards standardisation. Steiner-Khamsi (2014: 162) also argues that local contextual priorities help to explain why policies are borrowed (externalization), how they are locally modified and implemented (recontextualization), and what impact they have on existing structures, policies and practices (internalization). Capturing the nuances and political agency that play a mediating role, and differ from context to context, she goes on to say that globalisation can often be seen as:

> '… a domestically induced rhetoric that is mobilized at particular moments of protracted policy conflict to generate reform pressure and build policy coalitions.' (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014: 157)

Rappleye (2012a and b) recognises this agency effect and conceptualises policy borrowing as 'political production' using the analogy of the theatre to explain how policy proposals are carefully scripted and orchestrated to achieve specific policy outcomes. This form of legitimacy scripting can be seen in the way that PISA results are used to justify educational reforms in a diverse range of systems; reforms that can differ significantly from place to place in line with the priorities and values of local policy-makers. Recent comparative research carried out with one of my doctoral students (Forestier, 2015; Forestier and Crossley, 2015) on the impact of PISA in Hong Kong and England, for example, shows how the strong PISA results achieved in Hong Kong stimulated efforts by the Secretary of State for Education in England to copy or 'plunder' selected Asian practice (Gove, 2011). Indeed, in 2010 he reported to a Parliamentary Select Committee on Education that, 'I have been to Singapore and Hong Kong, and what is striking is that many of the lessons that apply there are lessons that we can apply here' (Gove 2010).

Three years later when launching the new National Curriculum, he went on to argue that, 'I want my children, who are in primary school at the

moment, to have the sort of curriculum that children in other countries have, which are doing better than our own.' (Gove, 2013).

These examples demonstrate the 'power of PISA' (see, for example, Meyer and Benavot, 2013) and the efforts of policy-makers to either emulate top performers or, in this case, to at least legitimate controversial formalistic reform proposals. It is, however, somewhat ironic to see how, at the same time, Hong Kong was engaged in efforts to borrow elements of English education that promoted less didactic, learner-centred pedagogy. Not only does this demonstrate what Sellar and Lingard (2013; 2014) portray as the rise of new 'reference societies' and enthusiasm to look to the high PISA performers in the East, but it adds further complexity to the policy transfer literature in showing how borrowing can work 'both ways' at the same time.

While in some contexts considerable agency in the mediation and adaptation of globally influential policy is visible, the impact of international initiatives and agendas can also lead to more direct forms of policy transfer where power differentials are greatest. This is particularly significant in low income countries, where postcolonial dependency on aid relationships demonstrates how direct transfer, or policy coercion and imposition, may still be in operation (Crossley, 2014; Crossley and Tikly 2004). Where the potential for the control or mediation of internationally inspired policy intervention is reduced, so too are the chances for successful educational reform at the level of implementation. This is indicated in the Papua New Guinea case discussed above, and more recently argued and documented in the light of African experience by insightful analysts such as Samoff (2003, 2004). To cite his report on the nature and impact of international assistance in the case of Burkina Faso:

> 'Collectively, agencies apparently continue to instruct more than listen and thus to undermine the dialogue and partnership they claim to construct. Heavy reliance on external funding makes it difficult for the government to assert and maintain an independent posture.' (Samoff, 2004, 397)

This adds further critical dimensions to the theoretical literature, and raises difficult but important questions about the role, political economy and influence of all forms of global goals, targets and their measurement. This includes UNESCO's series of Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Reports (UNESCO, 2016), and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015) that now command international

attention, along with dominant global conceptions of sustainability and sustainable development itself.

In sum, recent decades have clearly seen a resurgence of interest in the processes of education policy transfer, stimulated in part by intensified globalisation and the impact of PISA and other influential international studies of student achievement. This, in turn, has led to the development of new theoretical perspectives, critical lenses and conceptual tools that can do much to strengthen our analysis and understanding of contemporary education dilemmas and debates, including those that are raised by the themes of the 2018 BAICE conference and that are visible in the first 20 years of the Association.

Policy Transfer Theory: Informing Critiques, Innovations and Transitions

In this section of the paper I revisit and apply some of the central concepts and theoretical frameworks that have shaped the field of comparative and international education, with particular reference to the research on policy transfer that is considered above. Linking this to the conference theme, attention is given to the implications of this for work on sustainable development, the SDGs, the distinctive case of SIDS and the significance of contextual and cultural sensitivity in both educational reform and comparative research. The final section of the paper reflects upon the transitions of the first 20 years of BAICE, and potential priorities for future attention.

Revisiting Policy Transfer Theory

While policy transfer theory has a substantial history, the discussion above suggests that its place as a central concept within comparative and international education has been strengthened in recent times and, in view of this, it has a renewed and reconceptualised potential for further development and application. Much existing research has clearly focussed upon the transfer of policy and practice in formal schooling, even in the more recent work inspired by the impact of large scale, international surveys. Studies have also been carried out on policy transfer in the higher and further education sectors, in vocational education and training, and on adult education (McCowan, 2016; McGrath and Badroodien, 2016; McGrath 2010; IEA, 2016; Holford, Milana, Waller and Webb, 2017); but there is considerably greater scope for theoretically informed policy transfer research beyond the familiar parameters. More is also needed to document the multiple flows, directions and mechanisms of international policy influences, and to

interrogate and better understand the contemporary complexities, power relations and politics of such processes (Barrett and Crossley, 2015; Dale 2015).

My own recent work has paid attention to the impact, challenges and implications of the international transfer of broad research modalities. This is done in the context of global preoccupations with large-scale quantitative studies inspired by the PISA effect, associated league tables and, more pertinently, the 'big data' movement (Crossley, 2014). Much is currently being written about the potential benefits and strengths of big data applications, and their perceived ability to process vast amounts of statistical material to 'solve' social and economic problems (Mayer-Schönberger and Cukier, 2013). These are important developments that require close attention and hold considerable potential across all fields and disciplines. However, the challenges and limitations of this contemporary movement also deserve urgent and critical attention, especially from the social sciences, and from a comparative perspective. More researchers within our field are beginning to engage with such issues (Sobe, 2018, Unterhalter, 2017), but few are interrogating the power and dependency relations that the uncritical international transfer of big data skills and technology, especially from the North to the South, could generate. This is an expensive, large-scale and complex research modality,that can also be seen as a governance mechanism with challenging implications for the potential marginalisation and funding of valuable forms of context sensitive qualitative research. This is especially so when policy-makers and funders already prioritise statistical 'data', and other approaches and methodologies struggle to secure finance, status and legitimacy. Theoretical insights derived from the policy transfer literature could add greatly to the robustness, depth and reach of a balanced critique of big data applications in education and wider society and, it is argued here, this is currently one priority for future comparative and international research in education. I will return to related implications of this critique for sustainable development, indigenous research methodologies and postcolonial perspectives in a later section.

Reiterating Context

Context is another key concept in the history of our field and a second that my own research has prioritised, reiterating the argument that 'context matters' (Crossley, 2010) more than many policy-makers, and some researchers realise. My personal contribution to this, however, extends well beyond Sadler's garden metaphor in recognising the interplay and influence of multiple levels and forms of context*s* – including the historical and the intellectual/theoretical. Perhaps as

crucially, it is argued that such forms of analysis have increased pertinence in times of accelerating globalisation, when digitisation and the internet facilitate much faster, deeper and more questionable forms of policy transfer. As indicated above, this is especially so where the potential for local agency mediation is restricted or muted, as is often the case when powerful international agencies and other 'mechanisms' and 'actors' promoting international goals, targets or league tables engage with poorly resourced and aid dependent education systems (Tikly, 2017; McGrath, 2018). In this regard, for example, a critical analysis of the nature, goals, expense and influence of the relatively new 'PISA for development' initiative (Addey, 2017) in participating low income countries warrants further critical research in the light of the policy transfer literature.

The need for greater context sensitivity is, therefore, a familiar but ongoing priority, with both theoretical pertinence and practical relevance, if we are to deepen our understanding of reform processes, and if the prospects for successful educational innovation are to be improved. It is also an issue that is repeatedly under acknowledged in policy arenas and one where to paraphrase André Gide, recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1947: even if things have already been said if 'no one was listening, everything must be said again'.

It is, therefore, argued that increased context sensitivity, in multiple forms and at all levels, is both important from a theoretical point of view in improving our understanding of the nature and complexities of education and, more pragmatically, in helping to improve the chances of successful policy implementation. Such thinking avoids forms of dualistic debates that have long generated divisions, and some acrimony, between those in our academic constituency who prioritise research for theoretical understanding and others who highlight applied work designed to contribute to improved policy and practice. As argued elsewhere (Crossley, 2008), a bridging of these two cultures and traditions (along with other dimensions) can do much to reduce the research / policy / practice gap that has generated a consistent public and professional critique of educational and social research in recent decades (Furlong and Lawn, 2011). This is not to accept unwarranted criticism of the academy or to limit the diversity of approaches to educational research, 'academic comparative education' and critical scholarship. Rather, this can help to acknowledge the place and importance of many comparative 'educations' (Cowen, 2014) in ways that, through improved dialogue with respect for the 'Other', different constituencies, personnel and approaches may productively co-exist or potentially strengthen each other (McNess,

Arthur and Crossley, 2015). While some may see this as a way to legitimise the policy focus and impact of research compatible with the aims, values and transitions of the contemporary accountability culture, equal recognition is given here to the vital importance of critique, challenges and disruptions from the academic as public intellectual.

Sustainability in Policy and Practice

The importance of such theoretical and methodological arguments can be seen in the contested debates concerning policy transfer and the nature and impact of the PISA studies considered above. They are also central to the core themes of this conference relating to sustainable development and the SDGs. While the SDGs that were formally adopted at a special session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015 (United Nations, 2015) resulted from wide and inclusive global consultation, the extent to which they are truly global goals and targets or sensitive to contextual differences is open to debate. In his own 2015 BAICE Presidential Address, Kenneth King (2016, 971), for example, argued that:

> 'Running through the post-2015 discourse is the claim that this time, unlike the MDGs, the goals and targets are truly universal, for both richer and for poorer countries…But a closer examination of the text of *Transforming Our World* would suggest that the principal focus of the SDGs is still on 'developing countries' and 'least developed countries'. Every SDG with the exception of SDG5 has one or more of its targets or means of implementation couched specifically in terms of 'developing countries' or 'least developed countries', or both'.

This suggests the need for further critical interrogation of the SDGs themselves and of their implementation, measurement and motivation. King's Presidential Address and his subsequent research provide an insightful and critical foundation for this, while highlighting the power imbalances embedded within the architecture of international agencies and their 'global' agendas. More specifically, King (2017, 802) raises a number of pointed concerns about the potential influence of the narrower and less flexible measurement indicators that have subsequently been produced, largely by technical specialists in the UN's 'Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Indicators (IAEG)'.

Here then, is another timely focus for further critical analysis, including from the perspective of policy transfer theory. Are the SDGs really global in scope or still focussed on developing countries; will the narrower measurement indicators do more to determine the implementation of the

SDGs *in practice* than the more widely agreed goals and targets; and how will UN level indicators be related to those developed by member states in a diversity of contexts? To cite King again (2017, 814-815), 'Arguably, it is these latter indicators that should be the first priority rather than their being just a complement to the global series'.

Small States and the Cultural Dimension of Development

In this section, the implications of education policy transfer for small states are explored with reference to my ongoing research with colleagues working within such contexts worldwide. It is also argued that this has related implications for the theoretical literature itself, and for engagement with modes of international development and sustainability

Context sensitivity has long been an important issue in SIDS, which have their own distinctive challenges and related priorities for sustainable development and the role of education. Their experience during the era of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was certainly characterised by marginalisation from dominant agendas, encounters with policy imposition and much frustration. This has been demonstrated by over two decades of research carried out by small state partners and members of the University of Bristol's Education in Small States Research Group, working throughout the Caribbean, Pacific and Indian Ocean (see www.smallstates.net). Indeed, the experience of small states is especially revealing given the frequent distance between their own educational priorities and those of the dominant international agendas (Crossley, Bray and Packer, 2011). To give two examples: first, while the post-Jomtien (UNESCO 1990) period came to be dominated by international commitment to increased access to primary schooling, many small states had already achieved close to universal access at that level and were calling for support in developing the quality of their secondary education sectors (Mayo, 2008). Secondly, the development of tertiary education has long been a priority in small states aiming to make the most of their limited human resources, often against the counsel of international agencies and, until relatively recent times, contrary to the parameters of global development agendas (Martin and Bray, 2011).

Given this experience, combined with that in dealing with the challenges of climate change and sea level rise at what has been called 'the sharp end' of environmental uncertainty (Cabot Institute 2014, Crossley and Sprague 2014, Sprague and Crossley 2013), Dame Pearlette Louisy, the Governor General of St. Lucia in the Caribbean, calls for SIDS to do more to challenge and mediate global goals and targets, and to recognise their own aims, achievements and aspirations. She goes on to argue that:

> ‘While [small states] must continue to seek external assistance to implement their development strategies, they know best what their own needs are and what their priorities should be. They have much to contribute to the international discourse and to policy deliberations worldwide.’ (Louisy, 2011, xv)

To make this possible, and ever since we worked together on her own PhD, Dame Pearlette has been an advocate of initiatives designed to strengthen the development of local research capacity in small states, including through innovative North-South research partnerships. Using her influence as Head of State, she has also contributed to the policy transfer literature and to its application throughout the Caribbean (Louisy, 2001, 2004). In doing so, she challenges orthodox notions of development and highlights the significance of culture in the search for genuine forms of sustainable development in her own region:

> ‘If culture shapes what we mean by development, we need to have a firm understanding of the way of life by which we want to be defined. We need to agree on the social order that we need to construct and share with each other. We need to reach consensus on how we present ourselves to the world. We need to take up the challenge of reclaiming our own voices, of finding out who we are; the challenge of adapting these voices to present day realities; the challenge of nurturing the cultural ethos that will infuse our sustainable development agenda.’ (Louisy, 2018, 18)

Commitment to international research partnerships and to the cultural dimension of development has informed much of my own work with colleagues in other small states and beyond (Barrett, Crossley and Dachi, 2011), and has much to commend it as a further priority for comparative and international research in education. Recent work carried out with joint British Academy (BA) and University of the South Pacific (USP) funding, for example, reports on research carried out by an international, multidisciplinary and cross-cultural team in the small island state of Fiji (Crossley, Koya Vaka’uta, Lagi, McGrath, Thaman and Waqailiti, 2017, 16). This study compares local and international conceptions of quality education, draws upon work on the politics of aid and international development and reveals tensions between existing learner-centred policy frameworks and national reforms favouring formalism and high stakes testing (Ministry of Education, Fiji, 2015). The latter is inspired by international surveys of student achievement and the experience and

influence of the regional reference societies of Australia, New Zealand and India.

Theoretical literature on education policy transfer, including that on learner-centred pedagogy (Schweisfurth, 2011), thus proved helpful in framing this research, along with critical perspectives derived from postcolonial and indigenous research methodologies and cultural values (Smith, 1999; Thaman, 2008; Fairbairn-Dunlop and Coxon, 2014; Koya, 2015). Capturing many of the arguments that have been developed throughout this Presidential Address our Fiji research thus:

> 'challenges many of the assumptions that underpin the search for global 'best practice' in education, recognising the contextual dimension of quality in education and the implications of this for pedagogy, teacher education and the creative mobilisation of both global and local values if sustainable improvements to the quality of education are to be achieved.' (Crossley, Koya Vaka'uta, Lagi, McGrath, Thaman and Waqailiti, 2017, 16)

Research of this nature could not have been carried out without a foundation of collegial friendship and a commitment to mutually supportive, cross-cultural research partnerships. It is to the place of such values within BAICE itself that the final section of this paper now turns.

Conclusions : Some Implications and Challenges for BAICE

In addition to this Address, I have been pleased to contribute in other ways to the 20th Anniversary of BAICE. This includes participation, with a number of experienced colleagues, in the preparation of a Special Anniversary Forum feature for publication in *Compare* Volume 48 (5). In the pages of this, each contributor reflected upon developments in different dimensions of BAICE over the Association's first 20 years. These cover the pre-history, its foundation and early days, strengthening of the research dimension, opportunities for doctoral and early-career researchers, and the development and impact of *Compare* itself.

From these pages it can be seen that much has been achieved and deserves celebration. The contributors were also asked to consider ongoing challenges that need to be faced as we move in to the future, and in this concluding section, in addition to those key issues already raised above, I add more of my own priorities for the further development of BAICE in the light of the preceding discussion.

Firstly, I encourage others to revisit the policy transfer literature and apply its theoretical lenses in ways that engage with new and emergent research priorities and contexts. Relating to the spirit of the SDGs, and notions of global uncertainty, complexity and social justice, BAICE colleagues are already pioneering multidisciplinary research on 'Sustainability, Peace and Education'. This was the theme of the well-attended 20th Anniversary Symposium held in Bristol during May 2018, where the Keynote speaker Arjen Wals, Professor of Transformative Learning for Socio-Ecological Sustainability at Wageningen University in The Netherlands, argued how being 'disruptive' can play a positive role in challenging preconceptions, understanding conflict, and promoting sustainable peace (see https://cireblog.wordpress.com/blog/; Wals, Yoko and Leicht, 2017). Similarly, innovative and challenging work on violent extremism, education and sustainable peace building by Novelli and colleagues (2017; Novelli 2017), studies of inclusivity and transnational justice processes (Paulson and Bellino, 2017), and research priorities stemming from the impact of climate change and sea level rise all have urgent social justice, human rights and global security implications. Such work is vital in our times of economic, cultural and environmental uncertainty, and it highlights the importance of BAICE supporting comparative and educational research on these and related issues across and beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries.

Secondly, while BAICE has been particularly strong in supporting research in the broad arena of education and international development, and this deserves celebration, more could be done to strengthen collaboration with other constituencies, such as the British Educational Research Association (BERA), the Comparative Education Society in Europe (CESE), the Academy of Social Sciences (AcSS), and colleagues working on and in Western, UK and post-socialist educational systems and contexts (Masemann, Bray and Manzon, 2007). This could open further potential for the growth of BAICE, for greater attention to be given to research carried out in languages other than English, and for improved contributions to understanding the many pressing challenges faced at home. Indeed, more could be made of comparative research across the different parts of the United Kingdom, as work on 'home internationals' (Raffe and Byrne, 2015) has already demonstrated. Comparative research, building on work such as that by sociologist Diane Reay (2017) on the enduring social class differentials that are particularly characteristic of English education, could also be revealing and have significant impact in the light of evidence of declining social mobility in recent decades. Research by Gu and colleagues (2018) also demonstrates how comparisons of successful school leadership in Hong Kong and

English schools, highlighting the role of professional culture and policy mediation in context, could help to improve our understanding of leadership processes and extend the scope of future BAICE activity. Similarly, applications in the UK, of East Asian research on the shadow system of education could be timely and revealing in the light of dramatic increases in the extent of private tutoring in the UK, and given the need to understand how such initiatives 'outside the school' can have a significant influence on, and help to explain, student performance in test results at all levels (Bray, 2009). This is a good point on which to conclude here, given the many impressive achievements that have been fostered by BAICE throughout the past 20 years; and how so much of that work has clearly demonstrated that the quality of education consists of much, much more than test results and success in competitive league tables.

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